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INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 003673

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - EDITED LAST PARAGRAPH

SIPDIS

EEB/ESC/TFS CHRIS BACKEMEYER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2018
TAGS: [KTFN](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [EFIN](#) [PTER](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)
SUBJECT: TERRORISM FINANCE: U.S. DOMESTIC DESIGNATION OF
UNION OF GOOD

REF: SECSTATE 127070

Classified By: Economic Counselor Robert D. Griffiths, reasons: 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (SBU) On December 4, Econoff passed reftel points regarding the United States' designation of Saudi Arabia-based Union of Good as a supporter of terrorism under Executive Order 13224 to three offices within the RTG: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) International Security Unit, the National Coordination Center for Combating Terrorism and Transnational Crime (NCC-CTTC), and the Anti-Money Laundering Organization (AMLO). During a December 8 phone conversation in which Econoff made the same points, Counselor for the MFA's International Security Unit, Witchu Vejajiva, and a Policy Planning Analyst in the AMLO's Foreign Affairs Section, Sajachai Sangsayeo, confirmed receipt of the reftel information in order to facilitate the freezing of related assets should any be identified within Thailand.

¶2. (SBU) However, both Witchu and Sajachai confirmed what post had learned November 25 in a conversation with the AMLO regarding a different matter. The amended anti-money laundering act (AMLA), which came into effect on March 2, 2008, required the dissolution of the existing anti-money laundering board (chaired by the Prime Minister) and five member transaction committee that it appoints. As such, since the amended AMLA came into force, the AMLO has not been able to seize any assets from criminal activity, including those of terrorist, were they to be found. The AMLO will not be able to again do so until such time that a new board and committee are formed.

¶3. (SBU) Witchu explained that the anti-money laundering board, led by the Prime Minister and including Ministers of Justice and Finance is responsible for selecting the members of the transaction committee, the body authorized to seize assets under the AMLA. According to Witchu, once a new Royal Thai Government (RTG) is formed, it will need to appoint a new anti-money laundering board, which will need the separate approval of first the Parliament and then the Senate. Once that is done, a new transaction committee can be put in place and the AMLO can again seize assets should they be found. Individuals normally remain as members of the transaction committee for three years.

¶4. (C) Sajachai stated that Article 35 of the AMLA does provide the Secretary General of AMLO the authority to seize assets temporarily (for up to 90 days) as an emergency measure (the decision to do so must be reviewed by the transaction committee). However, the most recent Secretary General of AMLO retired September 30, leaving Deputy Secretary General Seehanat Prayoonrat (a Police Colonel) as acting Secretary General in his place. Due to uncertainty

about the authority of an official in an acting capacity, and since there is no active transaction committee, Seehanat has been reluctant to exercise this authority. Nonetheless, Witchu and Sajachai both confirmed that the AMLO retains the authority to investigate suspect assets for potential seizure and that the Royal Thai Police (RTP) and Department of Special Investigations (DSI) retain the ability to seize assets under relevant sections of the penal code.

15. (C) Comment: According to the AMLO, approximately ninety percent of money laundering cases are connected to narcotics and no clear evidence exists that terrorists groups launder money in Thailand. Despite the internal management problems afflicting AMLO at present, we believe that should there be credible evidence of the movement of terrorist funds, there remains sufficient authority to take meaningful action. Meanwhile, we will encourage the new government to move quickly to restore a new money-laundering board.
End Comment.
JOHN